

QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

The Arizona Rehabilitation Services Administration (AZRSA) coordinates with the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) and the Department of Health Services (DHS) who provide financial resources for long term-extended supported employment services as needed.

Through the use of limited Social Service Block Grant (SSBG) monies, separate from Title I funding, the AZRSA supports a limited number of individuals who require extended supported employment services.

QUALITY OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

The AZRSA has been involved with supported employment since receipt of the Supported Employment Systems Change Grant in 1985. Efforts over the years have consistently focused on maintaining options for individuals with significant disabilities and promoting the move of individuals from more restrictive to less restrictive and more integrated environments.

Strategies to promote more integrated and less restrictive employment environments for clients of the VR program are as follows:

1. The AZRSA provides an incentive system to reward community rehabilitation program providers for successful integrated, competitive, fulltime placements which provide medical/ hospitalization benefits.
2. The AZRSA works with Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) providers to improve the service delivery systems as follows:
 - Extensive technical assistance and training is provided to CRP staff in the areas of supported employment philosophy, job coaching, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), hiring qualified staff, marketing, and technological assistance based on needs identified by CRP providers.
 - The AZRSA has designated training staff to assist in the training needed by community providers. In addition, the AZRSA collaborates with Region IX Rehabilitation Continuing Education Program (RCEP) and the University of Arizona to plan and implement continuing education to community rehabilitation providers.
 - Clients are offered opportunities to move to less-restrictive settings in the community. Many community rehabilitation programs offer support group activities for individuals who are working and receiving supported employment services in either the Vocational Rehabilitation or the extended Employment Support Services program.
3. Another strategy has been to assist CRP providers to develop new integrated and competitive programs and service methodologies by advertising and awarding services to groups, establishment, development or improvement projects.

The AZRSA's management of its contracts not only ensures compliance with minimum standards, but also helps to achieve goals and objectives for supported employment services in the State of Arizona.

SCOPE

Supported employment services are provided to all clients of the VR program who have the need for such services, are eligible for such services, and for whom extended employment supports are necessary for the individual to maintain employment. Services include: development of and placement in jobs; time-limited, on-going support, such as on-the-job training, job coaching, supportive intervention and guidance counseling; follow-up services; and post-employment services following transition from VR to extended supported employment services. The use of existing resources, including Plan to Achieve Self Sufficiency/Impairment Work Related Expense (PASS/IRWEs) is explored for every individual and, if available, is used to pay for extended supported employment. If other resources are not available, funds for long-term supports are identified before proceeding with a VR Individualized Plan of Employment.

The AZRSA serves the following three groups of clients:

Persons with developmental disabilities

Time-limited VR supported employment services are the responsibility of the AZRSA. Responsibility for the ongoing employment support service needs of individuals with developmental disabilities continues with the Division of Developmental Disabilities. Employment-related services are coordinated with the Division of Developmental Disabilities under a joint agreement that describes mutual roles and responsibilities. Coordination of services is handled at the local VR counselor/DDD support coordinator level.

Individuals with serious mental illnesses

Individuals with serious mental illnesses are also served extensively by the AZRSA through its VR program. The AZRSA's agreement with the Behavioral Health Services (DHS/BHS) calls for the AZRSA to provide time-limited VR supported employment services and for DHS/BHS' contractors to provide the needed extended employment supports. An Interagency Agreement (IGA) Advisory Committee meets quarterly to evaluate the effectiveness of the agreement, to monitor the progress being made by mutual clients needing extended supported services, and to plan for the training needs of all parties in the agreement.

Other individuals with significant disabilities

Through its collaboration with the Councils of Governments in some areas of the state, the AZRSA is responsible for managing Title XX Social Services Block Grant funds to provide for the employment needs of individuals with severe disabilities. The AZRSA currently uses these funds to pay for extended employment support needs of approximately 100 individuals.

EXTENT

The VR eligibility process includes consideration of supported employment as an option to assist individuals with significant disabilities to attain employment outcomes. If long-term funding/supports are available, the individual will be served in the VR program.